

*Congressman Spent Years Fighting for EPA to Set TCE Standards in Response to Contamination in New York Communities*

Binghamton, NY -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today lauded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) release of its new health assessment for trichloroethylene (TCE) and final posting of the data to the Agency's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS, <http://www.epa.gov/IRIS/>). The final assessment characterizes the chemical as carcinogenic to humans and as a human noncancer health hazard affecting the central nervous and immune systems, the kidneys and liver, male reproductive organs and the developing fetus. The move will lead to stronger public health protections.

"These new standards will help protect people from TCE, which can cause cancer and other disastrous health consequences," said Hinchey. "I've been fighting to get this done for years, and I applaud the EPA finally taking action. Hundreds of homes along with businesses were contaminated by TCE vapor intrusion in Endicott, Ithaca, and in other communities throughout the state and country. Far too many families have paid the price. This is a dangerous chemical that needs to be recognized for what it is and cleaned up in the proper way to protect public health. The release of a TCE health assessment by the EPA is a very important step."

TCE toxicity values, as reported in the assessment, will lead to stronger protections from vapor intrusion from contaminated groundwater and soil to indoor air of overlying buildings. The report will also be used to revise EPA's Maximum Contaminant Levels, help establish cleanup methods at 761 TCE-contaminated Superfund sites and develop stronger standards for controlling TCE through the Clean Air Act.

The EPA's study of TCE began nearly 10 years ago, when EPA issued a Draft Health Risk Assessment, endorsed by its Science Advisory Board, which determined TCE to be five to 65 times more toxic than originally thought. Since that time, Hinchey has worked to finalize the study and has been a constant leader in efforts to clean-up TCE contamination in Endicott and hold all responsible parties accountable.

Earlier this year, a Hinchey-authored provision was included in a House Appropriations bill to allow a study on the health effects of trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination in Endicott, New York to move forward. Previously, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

(ATSDR) had indicated that the Endicott study could not move forward due to the limited sample size of those affected. To address the problem, Hinchey authored language that would allow the agency to apply data from a soon to be completed larger study on TCE at the U.S. Marine Corps base at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina to make determinations about health effects of TCE contamination in Endicott.

In 2003, Hinchey had language included in a federal appropriations bill to have ATSDR conduct its health-risk study. In 2007, Hinchey secured congressional approval for a National Institute for the Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study on TCE exposure and cancer rates among 28,000 IBM employees who worked at the company's Endicott site since 1964. Hundreds of homes in Endicott were contaminated by TCE as a result of vapor intrusion.

The New York State Department of Health and ATSDR have previously released results from a series of health statistics review studies of residents exposed to TCE -- studies Hinchey fought to initiate -- that reveal increased rates of certain types of cancers, specifically kidney and testicular cancers, and congenital heart defects for people and infants living in the area of the Endicott TCE spill.